

**AIMS HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS  
PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS  
WRITING**

**APPROACHES THE STANDARD**

**General AIMS Performance Level Descriptors (K-12)**

**This level denotes partial understanding of the knowledge and application of the skills that are fundamental for proficient work. Students who approach the standard demonstrate competency in the prerequisites necessary to begin working on the challenging content required of the student who meets the standards, but do not demonstrate full understanding of that challenging content.**

**General High School Writing Performance Level Descriptors**

Students who are approaching the standard in writing demonstrate the ability to identify the basic elements of written communication. They are able to edit simple and compound sentences for correct grammar, spelling, and usage. They can identify errors in subject-verb agreement, apply basic rules of capitalization and punctuation, and delete unnecessary words in a sentence for clarity. In their own writing, students at this level demonstrate some development of a main idea or message with some sense of audience and purpose in different genres.

**Specific High School Writing Performance Level Descriptors**

The student knows and is able to do the following:

**Students effectively use written language for a variety of purposes and with a variety of audiences**

- Write a composition that presents purpose and main ideas that are easily identifiable, with some details to support ideas
- Attempt to organize ideas in a logical sequence; demonstrate limited use of effective transitions.
- Demonstrate a sense of audience although it may be inconsistent
- Use simple words effectively, but may be repetitive or inappropriate to audience and purpose at times
- Demonstrate control of simple sentence constructions, but more complex sentences may be awkward; repetitive sentence patterns
- Demonstrate some control over basic writing conventions; errors in grammar and usage do not block meaning, but distract the reader

**Use correct grammar /language mechanics for clarity**

- Edit a sentence for spelling, grammar, usage such as correct spelling of common words, errors in subject-verb agreement, capitalization
- Delete unnecessary words for clarity
- Identify appropriate use of commas in a series

**Write an effective persuasive essay**

- Use the terminology for organizational structure, such as attention grabbers, supporting details, and believable arguments in persuasive writing

**Write an analysis of an author's use of literary elements**

- Identify the author's use of literary elements such as setting and atmosphere

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WRITING**

**Craft a cohesive research document that contains a logical structure**

- Recognize the components of a research document and the appropriate placement of those components in the document
- Identify details that support an argument

**WRITE FORMAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH A CLEAR PURPOSE**

- Identify basic application of formal business communication forms, such as letters, memos, resumes, and manuals
- Identify basic organizational patterns
- Identify formatting conventions
- Compose a simple letter appropriate to audience and purpose

**Write a narrative/story that shows an organized structure**

- Place events sequentially in a pre-existing narrative

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**MEETS THE STANDARD**

**General AIMS Performance Level Descriptors (K-12)**

**This level denotes demonstration of solid academic performance on challenging subject matter reflected by the content standards. This includes subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real world situations, and content-relevant analytical skills. Students who perform at this level are well prepared to begin work on even more challenging material that is required for the next grade level. Attainment of at least this level is the goal for all students.**

**General High School Writing Performance Level Descriptors**

Students who meet the standard demonstrate the ability to apply skills for effective written communication. They are able to edit a paragraph for correct grammar, spelling, and usage such as subject-verb agreement in complex sentences, verb tense, and commas in introductory phrases and clauses. Students demonstrate the ability to effectively structure a sentence, using transitions and correcting run-ons. In their own writing, they can identify and use strategies and techniques in a variety of genres specific to audience and purpose.

**Specific High School Writing Performance Level Descriptors**

The student knows and is able to do the preceding as well as the following:

**Students effectively use written language for a variety of purposes and with a variety of audiences**

- Write a composition that presents purpose and main ideas that are clear and focused; provide details to support ideas
- Organize ideas in a clear and coherent manner with a developed beginning, body, and conclusion; transitions, though present, may be formulaic
- Demonstrate a sense of audience awareness and commitment to the topic
- Use effective language that conveys the intended message. Word choice is functional and appropriate with some attempts to experiment with language
- Demonstrate some control over complex sentence structure; writing is fluent
- Demonstrate control over standard writing conventions used

**Use correct grammar /language mechanics for clarity**

- Use appropriate transitions, such as *and*, *but*, *since*, *when*, *unless*, within a sentence
- Correct run-on sentences
- Edit a paragraph for more complex errors such as correct verb tense, commas in introductory phrases and clauses, subject-verb agreement in complex sentences

**Write an effective persuasive essay**

- Identify the writer's point of view in the use of details, facts, reasons, examples, and descriptions in persuasive writing
- Identify the intended audience of a persuasive piece
- Identify supportive information and its most appropriate placement in a logical sequence
- Analyze key sentences, phrases, or words that distinguish a persuasive statement from a general statement

**Write an analysis of an author's use of literary elements**

- Interpret the author's use of literary elements such as character, setting, and atmosphere

**AIMS HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

**PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS**

**WRITING**

**CRAFT A COHESIVE RESEARCH DOCUMENT THAT CONTAINS A LOGICAL  
STRUCTURE**

- Follow the guidelines of a given style manual

**Write formal communications with a clear purpose**

- Use appropriate voice and word choice for a formal communication

**Write a narrative/story that shows an organized structure**

- Organize ideas in a narrative text with logical, meaningful sequence by creating a beginning and conclusion
- Provide a logical explanation/rationale for sequencing
- Distinguish characteristics of dialogue
- Identify an effective introduction to a story

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**EXCEEDS THE STANDARD**

**General AIMS Performance Level Descriptors (K-12)**

<p><b>This level denotes demonstration of superior academic performance evidenced by achievement substantially beyond the goal for all students.</b></p>
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**General High School Writing Performance Level Descriptors**

Students who exceed the standard demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate written language for its effectiveness. They are able to make sophisticated applications of language conventions: grammar, spelling, and usage. Students apply strategies to clarify meaning and construct clear and cohesive sentences and paragraphs. They evaluate sophisticated techniques of writing for its effectiveness to audience and purpose such as the strength of a writer's persuasive argument, the use of narrative elements, or the organization of research. Students consistently demonstrate strong control in applying these strategies and techniques to their own writing.

**Specific High School Writing Performance Level Descriptors**

The student knows and is able to do the preceding as well as some or all of the following:

**Students effectively use written language for a variety of purposes and with a variety of audiences**

- Write a composition that presents interesting and engaging ideas; provide a thorough/balanced exploration of the topic that makes connections and shares insights
- Organize writing to enhance the central idea. Demonstrate use of smooth, effective transitions from one idea to the next
- Demonstrate a strong sense of audience, with expressive, engaging, or sincere voice
- Employ a wide range of words, carefully chosen and placed for impact, that provide energy to the writing
- Demonstrate control over strong and varied sentence constructions that enhance meaning
- Demonstrate strong control of a broad range of writing conventions

**USE CORRECT GRAMMAR/LANGUAGE MECHANICS FOR CLARITY**

- Clarify meaning by eliminating redundancy, jargon, or flowery language
- Use appropriate transitions in compound and complex sentences
- Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions correctly
- Use commas with appositives correctly
- Identify parallel structure

**Write an effective persuasive essay**

- Analyze the dominant technique used in a persuasive piece of writing, such as connotation, strong verbs, repetition
- Distinguish among various forms of persuasive writing, such as editorials, reviews, essays, and critiques and their intended audience
- Interpret the purpose and characteristics of a thesis statement in a persuasive essay
- Evaluate the strength of a writer's persuasive strategy
- Evaluate the reliability of a writer's sources
- Evaluate the use of persuasive word choice such as strong verbs, descriptive adjectives, and connotations

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**Write an analysis of an author's use of literary elements**

- Analyze the author's use of literary elements and devices, such as plot, setting, character, atmosphere, conflict, and figurative language
- Identify the best supporting thesis statement in a complex text

**Craft a cohesive research document that contains a logical structure**

- Identify support for the thesis from accurate sources
- Evaluate the effective components of a research document, such as point of view, topic sentences, supporting evidence, and conclusion
- Analyze the correct use of technical elements such as the style of an endnote or citation

**Write formal communications with a clear purpose**

- Compose various forms of business communications appropriate to audience and purpose
- Use appropriate format for a formal communication
- Organize ideas in a formal communication

**Write a narrative/story that shows an organized structure**

- Analyze organizational strategies for narrative effect such as placement of transitional elements and flashback
- Distinguish among concrete, abstract, and figurative language